

The Opportunities and Benefits

Our hope for the future is that the ministries of these Alaska Native congregations will continue for years to come, as children and adults continue to grow in the Lutheran Christian faith.



Alaska Native peoples enrich the wider church with their strength of spirit so freely offered in hospitality, faith stories and music. They help build bridges of understanding and reconciliation between peoples.

We have the opportunity to enlarge the capacity for sustainability and growth in these congregations. Income earned from the SPLM Endowment Fund will do the following:



1. Sustain the Ministries

• **Ministerial support:**

Bring the salary and benefits for pastors up to standards

• **Facilities:**

Support the costs of properly maintaining all buildings including utilities

2. Deepen and Grow the Ministries

• **Leadership development:**

Training to emphasize being fully Native and fully Christian

Training lay leaders in worship, youth, children's education

Training toward ordination.

• **Ministry Development:**

Outreach, particularly to Alaska Native peoples in urban areas.

Our campaign title was chosen with great care. Those words, which the Prophet Jeremiah spoke so long ago, are true today. There is a Future and a Hope for these faithful congregations and their villages. It's God's promise to them and to us.

Your gifts can assure that the ministry of Jesus Christ continues in this treasured land for years to come.

Send gifts to:

SPLM Endowment Fund
Alaska Synod, ELCA
1847 West Northern Lights Blvd. #2
Anchorage, Alaska 99517-3343



Campaign Steering Committee:

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"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the House of the Lord." - Ps. 122



BREVIG MISSION TELLER SHISHMAREF NOME WALES ANCHORAGE

"A Future and A Hope"

(Jeremiah 29:11)



*Affirming the Past..
Securing the Future
For the
Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministries
(SPLM)*



"The songs teach people how to be strong. Songs help the younger people live the right way, more truthful to themselves and others. Church has a lot of meaning for young people. Church brings out gifts in people they didn't know they had. When they realize their gifts they can bring their lives back into line."

An elder from the Seward Peninsula



The Place and the People

These words from an elder ring with the history, the deep faith and the understanding that can only come from years of experiencing the life of the Lutheran Church on the Seward Peninsula of Alaska. These words reflect the struggles and the victories, which have been the story of the Inupiat people and their faith since they first welcomed Lutheran missionaries in 1894.



The traditions and history of more than 12,000 years reflect a deeply spiritual, indigenous people who have developed a Christian faith that is tested daily against the harsh arctic environment. It is a faith that has resulted in the establishment of congregations in villages just below the Arctic Circle in Wales, Brevig Mission, Teller and Shishmaref, and in larger cities of Nome and Anchorage.

These Christians live out their faith by serving each other and their village neighbors. They have trusted God through huge physical and socioeconomic challenges. The churches have become the social and spiritual centers of community life...a stabilizing presence in the midst of chaos.

The Economic Challenge

Throughout the history of these churches, the economic realities have been a constant barrier to their ministries. Just consider:

- Most people live below the poverty line without running water or flush toilets
- Most live a no-cash or low-cash subsistence lifestyle: fishing, hunting, and gathering
- Cost of utilities, air travel, airfreight, and building maintenance has skyrocketed
- Increases have sapped congregation reserves and preclude necessities
- People in these congregations cannot sustain ministry costs on their own
- ELCA support has been vital for years but has decreased
- Mission Partner congregations' gifts have been vital but not nearly enough
- Current SPLM Endowment earnings are too small to support congregations



In 1990, specifically to help meet these difficulties, an Endowment Fund was created. The plan was to develop a fund large enough to spin off significant annual interest to support the work of the SPLM. That fund has grown to \$1.1 million but it is not enough. It is important to note that over \$150,000 of that total was contributed by Seward Peninsula individuals and congregations. In order to support the continuing needs of the congregations, the Endowment Fund needs to increase significantly.



To that end the Alaska Synod has embarked on a campaign, A Future and a Hope, to grow the Endowment over the next 3-5 years.